Burleigh

Families

Irish Families in Ancient Quebec

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John O'Farrell

Irish Families in Ancient Quebec Records, 1872

Reprinted 1908.

H. C. Burleigh
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IRISH FAMILIES IN ANCIENT QUEBEC RECORDS

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF SOLDIERS FROM THE IRISH BRIGADE REGIMENTS OF FRANCE SERVING WITH THE ARMY OF MONTCALM

Annual Concert and Ball

OF THE ST. PATRICK'S
SOCIETY, MONTREAL,
15th OF JANUARY, 1872

Address delivered on invitation of the Society, by John O'Farrell, Esquire, Advocate, President of the Hibernian Benevolent Society of Quebec. . . Printed by John Lovell in Eighteen Hundred and Seventy-two, St. Nicholas Street, Montreal.

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REPRINTED FOR
THE HONORABLE CHARLES MURPHY
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Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

In addressing you this evening, I shall omit all reference to those Irish matters with which you are as well acquainted as I am, and which can add nothing to your knowledge of the facts, or to your love of the old land; but striking out into regions hitherto unexplored, I shall open up to your gaze some few pages of Canadian history shaped by Irish minds, illumined by Irish genius, or made famous by Irish valor. I shall begin the history of a now forgotten Irish Colony on the banks of the St. Lawrence, leaving to other hands the task of completing what I shall have begun.

It is not generally known, that long before Wolfe had scaled the Heights of Abraham, a large Irish element had settled down in Canada, intermarried with the French, and had become absorbed in the French population of this country; and I almost fancy that I see some of my hearers politely lift their eyebrows, and smile incredulously at my assertion, that the closing scenes of the French wars in Canada witnessed more than one wild Irish huzza, at some new triumph, on American soil, of the Irish Brigade of glorious memory. When my attention was drawn to the subject by the venerable O'Callaghan's statement that the Bearn Regiment is supposed to have been a portion of the Irish Brigade serving in Canada, I felt inclined to doubt the statement, be-

cause neither Forman nor O'Connor make any mention of the fact. Subsequent researches made by me have, however, convinced me that the Brigade served here; and I thought that I could not better employ the half-hour allotted to me for my address this evening, than by endeavouring to do a tardy act of justice to that Irish worth which had helped to hew down the mighty forests of this fair Province, than by rescuing from oblivion that Irish valor, which if it had, at length, failed to conquer vastly superior numbers, yet had several bright days, and among them one that rivals in glory the never to be forgotten Fontenoy. My task this evening, then, shall be to show that a considerable portion of the French-speaking population of this Province is of Irish extraction, and that such Franco-Irish element was still further increased, at the conquest, by the absorption of the sheltered remnants of the Irish Brigade, then serving in Canada; and I shall conclude with a brief sketch of the services of the Brigade on American soil.

If any gentleman, in the course of my remarks, desires to sift the accuracy of my assertions, I shall be happy to oblige him; for I have here with me for reference most of the books and extracts from the public documents which go to prove my statements.

In this work, just issued from the press, and compiled by the Reverend Father Tanguay from the Parish Registers of Lower Canada, we have a complete record of every marriage, birth and death, that has taken place, among the Catholic settlers, from the first settlement of the country down to our own days.

Of the 2,500 families that made up the population of Lower Canada, at the close of the seventeenth century, well-nigh one hundred families are shown by this book to be natives of Ireland; and, in about thirty other cases, either the husband or the wife is also shewn to be of Irish origin. In most cases, as I shall precently shew by illustration, the worthy old French Priests, who have made the entries in the Registers, have so gallicised the orthography of the Irish names as to render them undistinguishable from the French settlers proper; and my statement of this evening would not be susceptible of proof, were it not for the statements in the entries themselves that the persons therein mentioned were natives of Ireland. In some cases the good old Curé seems to have hopelessly abandoned the attempt to spell the Irish name, and he merely entered the baptismal name, just adding after it, the word "Irlandais," or "Irlandaise," as the case might be. For instance, who would have dreamt that "Thimoté Sylvain" was intended for "Timothy O'Sullivan," son of Cornelius Daniel O'Sullivan, County of Killarney, and of Elizabeth McCarthy, his wife, both citizens of Cork, in Ireland? Yet such is the case; for, in January, 1720, Timothy O'Sullivan, then practising as a Surgeon, was married at Pointe aux Trembles, near Quebec, to Marie Gautier, widow of Christophe Dufros de la Jemmerais, and mother of Madame d'Youville, foundress of the General Hospital or Grey Nuns, of this city; and to remove all doubt as to his Irish birth, O'Sullivan has taken care to furnish posterity with a certificate signed by Fitz James, Duke of Barwick, Lord Clare,

Mr. Rute, Mr. Duglas, Mr. Couq, all Colonels of Irish Regiments in the service of France, and all attesting the nobility of O'Sullivan's descent, and his parentage, as I have given them above, and relating his sixteen years' service as Captain of Dragoons in the Irish Brigade; the certificate further states that, having sailed for Ireland, to recruit for his regiment, he was taken prisoner by pirates, and brought to New England, whence he escaped to Canada; his wife was the daughter of the Governor of Three Rivers; a few particulars of his life are given in the Abbé Faillon's Life of Madame d'Youville.

In like manner, who could guess that "Tec Corneille Aubry," married at Quebec, on the 10th September, 1670, was an Irishman? Yet the Register leaves no room for doubt upon the subject; he was the son, says the Register, of "Connor O'Brennan," and of Honorah Janehour, of St. Patrick's (Diasonyoen), Ireland, his real name being "Teague Cornelius O'Brennan." In this connection, I may mention that, when I was pursuing my studies in the College at Quebec, our Rector was the Rev. Dr. Aubry, a worthy and pious Divine, and one of three brothers in the Priesthood in Lower Canada, and the uncles of two other young Canadian clergymen. Dr. Aubry, until quite recently, lived in the firm belief that he was of purely French extraction; in fact, if my memory serves me right, he used playfully, at times, to pull my little ears for being, as he used playfully to say, such a wicked little Irlandais. Now the researches of Father Tanguay in the musty old Church Registers of Lower Canada have re-

vealed the astounding fact that Dr. Aubry is, after all, a countryman of our own, an Irlandais, a lineal descenant of that Teague Cornelius O'Brennan; another of his descendants is Parish Priest in the Town of St. Johns, near this city, Montreal.

Who, again, I ask, but one able to answer the sphinx, could fancy that John Houssye, dit Bellerose, was an Irishman? He was so nevertheless; was married here on the 11th October, 1571; and as the Register attests, he was born in the Parish of St. Lawrence O'Toole, Dublin, and he was the son of Matthew Hussey and of Elizabeth Hogan, his wife, both Dubliners and both under the protection of that very Irish saint, O'Toole. If I mistake not, Mr. Bellerose, the member for Laval, can trace back his pedigree to our friend, Jack Hussey, from Dublin.

Thus also we find Jean Baptiste Riel, married at Isle du Pads, on the 21st January, 1704; he is surnamed "Sansouci," which we may translate either "careless" or "De'il may care," as we please; this Riel is described in the Register as having been a native of St. Peter's Parish, in the city of Limerick, in Ireland; from the singular nickname (sansouci) he bore with his comrades, and from the consonance, "Riel" and Reilly, I should be inclined to think that our Isle du Pads friend was Jack Reilly, the de'il-may-care, all the way from Limerick, and that he must have given and taken some hard knocks under Sarsfield. This "Riel" or Reilly, as he should be called, is the direct ancestor of "Louis Riel" of Red River fame; and this fact may serve to account for

the close friendship subsisting between Riel and O'Donohoe.

Again, Louis de Buade, Count de Frontenac, while Governor here, had a trusty servant named "Pierre Lehait," as chamberlain; and at the same time, there lived in Quebec, a man who was married at Quebec on the 9th September, 1699, as "Jean Lehays"; and yet the Registers shew that these two men were brothers, named John and Peter Leahey, respectively, and that they were the Irish sons of Thomas Leahey and Catherine Williams, of the County of Wicklow, in Ireland.

Thus it is with John, Daniel and Joseph Thomas, sons of Edward Thomas and Catherine Casey; and thus, also, it is with John Edmunds and his wife, Mary Kelly, and thus it is with the 130 couples I have mentioned; the Church Registers unmistakably show, and state in so many words, that these parties were natives of Ireland. In some cases besides these, there are a few persons described as being Scotch, who were undoubtedly Irish; for instance, I find the burial of a nun of the Hotel-Dieu of Quebec, Sœur Marie de la Conception, by the name of Marie Hirouin; and by other entries I find her real name to have been Mary Kirwan. She came to Canada in 1643, and was buried in 1687; she is stated to have been the daughter of a Scotch noble; but this is evidently a mistake, for who ever heard of a Scotch Kirwan?

I could thus go through the list of unmistakably Irish settlers in Lower Canada during the first century of its history; but I have mentioned enough of them for the purpose in view, and what I have

shown in connection with the fact that the disbanded soldiers of the Carignan Regiment settled in the neighborhood of Quebec, makes it highly probable that, in the original owners of the lands fronting the St. Lawrence near Quebec, are to be found the descendants of the "Wild Geese"; indeed, if an extreme resemblance, nay in many cases a perfect agreement of the names in sound in both languages, be a safe criterion, one may readily trace in the French-Canadian Martins, Nolans, Nolins, Hallés, Barrettes, Morins, Guérins, and Bourkes on the south shore opposite Quebec, the old Celtic Martins, Nolans, Healeys, Barretts, Morans, Gearans and Burkes; indeed, the battle-field of Wolfe and Montcalm derives its name, the Plains of Abraham, from the former owner of the field, an old Irish sailor and pilot, named Abraham Martin, wrongly surnamed 'l'Ecossais by his neighbours, precisely as the Irish nun, Mary Kirwan, is stated to have been of Scotch descent.

It requires, moreover, but little effort of the imagination to discover in the Alaries, Alains, Mainguys, Moreans and Binettes on the north shore near Quebec, the time-honored Irish patronymics of O'Leary, Allan, Magee, Barry, O'Brien, O'Dea, McMorrogh, and Bennett.

With the permission of the Prothonotary at Quebec, I have searched through the Registers of the Quebec Cathedral for the first half of the last century, both before and shortly after the Conquest, and I find in the following names which abound there for that period, a most remarkable Irish ring, namely: Caissy, Massy, Harnois, Cahey, Cahel, d'Alet,

Mally, Kéry, Lanan, Barden dit Lafontaine, Jacson, Janson dit La Palme, Obaurette, Maclure, Delané dit Laliberté, Deniou, Deniau, O'Neil, Carel, Travers, Mony, Molloye, Grefin, De Gannes, Hill, Gourlée, Gourdon, Duffy dit Charest, Graton, Couc dit Montour, Couc dit Lafleur, Griffon, Guéré, Bélet, Boilan, Trehet, Martin, Léret.

Apart from the remrakable agreement of the names in sound, three striking circumstances tend to strengthen the belief that those names are of Irish origin, and these circumstances are:

Firstly—That in searching through the Registers I have found the persons bearing those names intermarried more frequently with each other than with persons bearing other names.

Secondly—That they generally assist as groomsmen and bridesmaids at the weddings of each other; and

Thirdly—That, after the Conquest, when the Irishman, fresh from the sod, drops into Quebec, the Registers show him to be best man or godfather, on every available occasion, among the families bearing those names.

It would seem, indeed, as if the persons bearing those names had long formed a sort of colony apart, and were drawn more closely together and irresistably attracted towards every fresh Irish arrival by some common, and very strong, bond of union. A few examples drawn from the Registers of the Parish of Quebec, about the time of the Conquest, will serve to make this quite plain.

On the 19th February, 1759, before the Conquest, a soldier of the Regiment of Berry is married, and

his best man is Sergeant Noel François Nicholas Finégan (Finegan), of the same Regiment. On the same day Pierre Bélet (Bailey), is married, and his best man is Nicholas Martin (Martin), another soldier in Boishebert's Company. On the following day, Martin in his turn married, and his best man is Antoine Jacson (Jackson), but whether civilian or soldier the Register does not state. On the 26th February, 1759, Pierre Louis Helleine dit la Jeanesse (evidently an Allan), a soldier, is married, and his best man is Nicholas Devin (Devin). On the 23rd April, 1759, Louis Nicholas Lachaux dit La Grenada, a soldier in Montresson's Company, is married to Elizabeth Donlan (Donnellan), the best man being Pierre Boillan (Boylan), Corporal in the same Company, and one of the invited witnesses, who signs the Register, is Captain Delainé, of the same Company. On the 24th June, 1760, after the Conquest, Martin Echenner, who may or may not have been a Shanahy, is married, and the three witnesses to his marriage are Duffy dit Charest, Barthelmi Hill, and Guillaume DuBarry; that entry speaks for itself.

On the 7th of August, 1761, Mrs. Janson is godmother to Massey's child. On the 21st of September of the same year, Thomas Caret (Carey) is married to a Moran; on the 27th of September, of the same year, Louis Langlois and Charlotte Moran are sponsors for the child of Jean Langlois. On the 7th of November of the same year, the undoubtedly Irish James Matthews and Miss Janson dit la Palme, are sponsors for a daughter of Delzennes; on the 23rd of November of the same year, Jean James is

married to Françoise Guéry; on the 25th of November of the same year, Charles Martin is godfather to the daughter of Michel Jourdain (Jordan). On the 1st February, 1762, Charles Orion dit Champagne (evidently an O'Ryan), is married, and the witnesses are François Bélet, Joseph Dalais, and three "Maclures" (the father and two sons), whose Irish origin I have ascertained beyond all doubt, as I shall presently state.

It is also a very striking fact that all the families bearing the Irish names I have mentioned, exhibit an exuberant fondness for the Christian names of Bridget and Judith; there is a Bridget in every family of them, and a Judith in every third or fourth family; and although I have found none of the male children christened by the name of Patrick, that circumstance has but little weight; because, on perusing the list of officers of James' army, and of the Brigade, I find but one "Patrick" among them, the Earl of Lucan, Patrick Sarsfield.

Another strongly corroborative circumstance as to the existence of the Irish colony I speak of, is to be found in the name "Trou de St. Patrice," St. Patrick's Hole, borne by a small, but very safe, anchorage ground at the Island of Orleans, 16 miles below Quebec; that very significant name was not given to the place yesterday, nor yet the day before yesterday; for a French manuscript, over a hundred years old, the Hartwell Library manuscript, a copy of which is to be found in the library of the Quebec Historical Society, gives an account of the siege of Quebec by Wolfe, and speaks of that anchorage ground by its name of "Trou de St. Patrice," as if

the place, long before that time, had borne that name. Again, Governor de la Galissoniere, in writing from Canada to the French War Minister on the 28th of May, 1746, says, "Mr. de la Grois, a returned French prisoner, had heard Generals Shirley and Warren mention Tadousac Cove and St. Patrick's Hole as places where the British fleet might anchor on moving up against Quebec."

Father Ferland, the historian of Canada, moreover informs us that the harbor in question bore the name of "St. Patrick's Hole' 'fully seventy years before the Conquest.

Such exceptional devotion in a French country to an Irish Saint can have had its rise in one source only, and is the strongest possible corroboration of the statements I have been making.

The year after the Conquest three Irishmen — unmistakably Irish (for the Registers state they were born in Ireland) appear in Quebec; their names are Daniel Donne, William Curtain and Jeremiah Duggan; Duggan is the barber mentioned by Smith, the historian, as having joined the Irish-American General, Montgomery, at the siege of Quebec, in 1775, at the head of 500 Canadians. As soon as Donne, Curtain and Duggan appear on the stage, scarcely a christening or wedding takes place among the families bearing the Irish names I have mentioned without the signature of one of the three in the Register, as godfather, best man or witness; and Duggan eventually marries a granddaughter of old Abraham Martin, and Curtain marries a niece of one Langlois, whose name denotes him to have been of English-speaking origin.

Among those whose names I have mentioned above, there are two families which deserve especial notice at my hands; they are the Maclures and O'Neills. From family papers in the possession of Hon. M. de Léry of Quebec, it appears that the Maclures had come from Ireland to Canada forty years before the Conquest; and, on the extinction of the name here, the family property amassed here, consisting of Dexter's (now Mills') Hotel, Quebec, passed to collateral heirs, now residing in Letterkenny, Ireland, and drawing their rents through Mr. Hossack, of Quebec.

With regard to O'Neill, when Wolfe was thundering with his cannon at the gates of Quebec, in 1759, this man, O'Neill, had occasion to have a child baptized; and, whether he had reason to fear the operation of British laws as to treason, or whether he had a wholesome recollection of the English statute, awarding the penalty of death for treason to any one assuming the name of O'Neill, I know not — but, certain it is, that, on signing the act of baptism as the father, he wrote his name Onelle in one word, without the apostrophe, and with a minuscule N; and, after the Conquest, as year after year rolled by, and he saw nobody hurt, his Irish orthography improved, until, on the 24th November, 1761, when, being a witness to the marriage of his niece, he signed the Register in genuine Irish style, "P. O'Neill."

I could multiply examples of such entries, which have brought conviction to my mind that many of the 400,000 Irishmen, who are proved by the records of the War Office in Paris to have served in the

armies of France from 1645, and their descendants must have been rewarded with grants of farms in Lower Canada; and the number of Irish families thus settled in this country, and mustering several hundreds, with one century for expansion, must have formed a very large proportion of the 60,000 souls, who passed with Canada, in 1759, under the British Flag.

I may be asked how have those Irish names disappeared? The answer is simple. Many of them have not disappeared; others of them have disappeared, I shall show how. The Abbé Faillon tells us that, with reference to all English-speaking persons, the French being unable to pronounce their names, used the Christian name, and added L'Anglois after it; he tells us, moreover, that Dr. Timothy O'Sullivan was called Sylvain by the French who could not pronounce the name; and that the Doctor acquiesced in the change, corresponded in that name with the French authorities, and received from the French King a diploma as surgeon by the name of Sylvain. In like manner, since the Conquest I have found Jeremiah Duggan's name changed to Jérémie de Ganne, William Curtain's name changed to Guillaume Cotonne, Edmond to Rougement, Edmonds to Haimond, Leahy to De la Haye, Daly to Dalais, Penny to Péné, Fitzsimmons to Simon, and Shallow to Châlé; for these changes I refer to entries to be found in the Quebec Parish Church Register in February, 1762.

Comparatively large as that Irish colony must have been, it received a large accession from the shattered remnants of the Irish Brigade, who, after

having served through the war, settled in this country after the Conquest.

But, before noticing the brilliant achievements of the Brigade here, it is fitting that I should briefly state the evidence we have of this important fact in the history of Canada. Unfortunately the records of the War Office in Paris from 1736, which would have settled the question beyond all doubt, are missing; some scattering papers only remain; enough, however, remains to convince any unprejudiced person of this great and hitherto unknown feature of Canadian history. The scattered documents remaining have been compiled and published by the venerable Dr. O'Callaghan (once a fellow-townsman of yours), under the aupices of the State Legislature of New York. From these papers, to be found in the tenth volume of that work of O'Callaghan's, and from other sources that I shall cite, as I proceed, I shall draw convincing proof that the Irish Brigade served five years in Canada, from 1755 to 1760.

In volume X of that work, page 368, of the published documents drawn from the archives of Paris, we find a letter to the Count d'Argenson, the French Minister of War, from the French Commissary General, Doreil (whom, from the name, I more than suspect to have been an O'Reilly); that letter contains the following passage: "I regard, then, as certain, my Lord, that the king will send some reinforcements next year. In that case, permit me an observation, whereupon I have conferred with Mr. de Vaudreuil, who agrees with me in opinion. Among the number of Battalions, that you will order over, I think it would be well to send over ONE Irish

Battalion, the rather as it would possess all the necessary resources to recruit, itself."

At page 925 of the same volume, we find a memoir without date, but supposed to have been presented in 1754 to the King by the Minister D'Argenson, acting upon that suggestion, and recommending that Irish troops be sent to Canada.

In volume VII, page 270, of the same work, and in volume I, page 494, of another work, the Documentary History of New York, we find, copied from the London Archives, the sworn declaration of a soldier of Shirley's Regiment, made before Sir Charles Hardy, and transmitted by him in 1756 to the Lords of Trade in England. That affidavit states: "Claude Frédéric de Hutenac, of Major General Shirley's Regiment declares that on Monday, the ninth of August, a prowgalley went out of the Harbour of Oswego, and discovered the French camp about a mile from the Fort." After describing the siege of Fort Oswego, a Council of War that was held, and the hoisting of the white flag by the British as a signal of surrender, this soldier, who was a deserter from the French, and must consequently have known the Brigade, goes on to say, "upon which this Declarant said to Colonel Littlehales, if you are going to give up the Fort, you must suffer me, who am a deserter from the French, to make the best of my way, because they will have no mercy upon me; the Colonel gave me and seven other deserters leave; but, before we got quite clear, we saw the French from the opposite side of the harbour getting into boats, and among them some

clothed with red faced with green, who belong to the Irish Brigade."

In reference to that affidavit, I feel some curiosity to know why Sir Charles Hardy deemed the presence of the Brigade here a fact of sufficient importance to establish it by affidavit for the information of his government, unless some treaty to which the neutral powers were parties, prohibited the employment of the Brigade against England; the existence of such a treaty would explain the sort of veil that has been thrown over the presence of the Brigade here, and would also explain the disappearance of the Paris Archives.

Again in his Journal of the Capture of Fort Oswego, to be found at page 494 of volume I of O'Callaghan's Documentary History of New York, de Montcalm goes out of his way to inform the King that two of the Regiments made prisoners there, namely, Shirley's and Pepperel's, had been engaged (on the British side, of course) in the Battle of Fontenoy. It is difficult to suppose that this episode in de Montcalm's Journal was suggested by anything else than the recollection of that new triumph of the Brigade over their hereditary foes.

To that direct evidence of the earnest appeal of the Commissary for Irish soldiers, that concurrence of the minister in the suggestion, and that proof of their actual presence at Oswego in 1756, I may add the testimony of the author of the Irish Settlers in America, to the effect that Dr. Edmund Hand, who afterwards rose to the post of Adjutant General under Washington, had originally come out to Can-

ada with the Brigade, and served there with them, as surgeon, until the close of the war.

Apart from all that we have, at pages 750 and 759 of volume X of the Documents relating to the History of New York, two lists of the officers of the French army killed and wounded at the battle of Ticonderoga, or Carillon, as the French term it, a majority of them are unmistakably Irish, for instance: "Adjutante de Macarti (MacCarthy evidently), Captain de Patrice (the son of Patrick, evidently a Fitzpatrick), Duglas (most likely the officer who signed O'Sullivan's certificate), Adjutant Carlan (evidently (Carolan), de Moran (evidently Moran), Forcet (a Forsyth), de Harennes (evidently O'Hearn), and Deniau (evidently O'Donohue). Besides that list of killed and wounded, we meet frequently with mention by de Montcalm to the king, of the great bravery and eminent services of such officers as de la Paure (Power), d'Herte (Hart), de Barotte (Barrett), de Lac (Lake), de Coni (Cooney), de Hughes (son of Hugh, evidently a McHugh), Belcombe, Floid, D'alet (Daley), all names to be found in the list of officers of the Brigade, as given by McGeoghegan and O'Connor.

Thus, also, at pages 401 and 406 of the tenth volume of the Documents relating to the History of New York, we find Mr. de Klerec (an O'Cleary) writing to the minister that he has news from Mr. de Macarti (evidently another McCarthy) commanding the French troops, in the Illinois country; and further on, at page 410 of the same volume, we have the commandant of Fort Duquesne, writing to this last McCarthy, relating that the English have cut

off his supplies from Canada, and asking McCarthy to send him some provisions, which McCarthy immediately despatches to him from his own very scanty store.

This McCarthy, whose name all through the other French despatches is spelled as de Macarti, is at length styled by his genuine Irish name of MacCarthy, in a despatch, p. 1081 of the same volume, from de Vaudreuil, at Montreal, shortly before the capitulation of Montreal. In that despatch de Vaudreuil informs the King that MacCarthy, commandant of Illinois, still holds out in the Fort de Chartres. And MacCarthy did hold out for a year after the capitulation of Montreal, and only surrendered the fortress on an express order from the French King; and, in this connection, I have much pleasure in informing French-Canadian historians, who, for one reason or another, have ignored the services of the Brigade, that the last defended of the French strongholds in America was defended by Irish arms, and that the last cannon discharged for French honor on this continent was fired by that Irishman, MacCarthy.

Besides all that, there are many incidents in the history of those days that are obscure by themselves, and that can be explained on the supposition only of the presence of the Brigade in Canada. For instance, we find in de Montcalm's Journal, p. 494, of the first volume of the History of New York, that de la Paure (Power) is the officer sent by Montcalm to revise the articles of capitulation of Fort Oswego. What else prompted de Montcalm but de la Paure's knowledge of English, and the natural desire on de

Montcalm's part to gratify his Irish soldiers by allowing an Irish officer to receive the swords of the commanders of Shirley's and Pepperel's Regiments, twice beaten by the Brigade? Again, when the capitulation of Montreal was about to take place, the 6th article submitted by de Vaudreuil (Smith's History, Vol. I, p. 363) ran thus:

"The subjects of His Britannic Majesty, and of "His Most Christian Majesty, soldiers, militia or "seamen, who shall have deserted, or left the service "of their sovereign, or carried arms in North Amer-"ica, shall be pardoned."

That article was refused by General Amherst.

Smith informs us that de Vaudreuil sent de Bougainville, and Captain de Lac, of the Queen's Regiment, to General Amherst, three several times, but without success, to obtain a modification of the articles on this head. A last attempt, in the same direction, was made by de Lévis, who sent de la Paure, with a letter to Amherst, but all to no purpose. De Lévis was so enraged at this, says Garneau, that he was deterred by de Vaudreuil's positive orders only from withdrawing to St. Helen's Island, and there defending himself to the last extremity with the remnant of the French troops.

What other portion of the French army, I ask, than the Irish soldiers, thus threatened with summary military vengeance for high treason, could have been interested in that article? Who but Colonel Power, Captain Lake, and their Irish comrades, had reason to fear the consequences?

The incident, too, of de Vaudreuil and de Lévis having been required by Haldimand to affirm on

their honors, that the colours of the French regiments had been destroyed when the troops first came here, and this as a reason for not delivering them up — that incident, I say, coupled with Colonel Knox's sneer, in his Historical Journal, that the colours must have been destroyed since the battle of the Plains of Abraham — for he had, he says, seen them there — makes it probable that the troops who did not give up their colours must have been actuated by some such motive as the fear of discovery.

Knox, at pages 339 and 378, says that the traitors had been sent off to Louisiana, and that they were commanded by Johnson, an outlawed rebel — he meant, of course, the Chevalier Montreuil. With all respect for Colonel Knox, I do not think they went to Louisiana.

Garneau, in his History, says that only 2500 men, women and children embarked for France; he is mistaken; those who left the colony then numbered 1740 only. Garneau adds: "The smallness of this number proved at once the cruel ravages of the war, the paucity of embarkations sent from France, and the great numerical superiority of the victors."

With all due respect for M. Garneau's opinion, it proves nothing of the sort. All who were willing to go were sent in English, not French, vessels, and de Lévis, in a despatch to the French minister, gives the true reason of the number being so few; de Lévis said in that despatch that the remainder of the troops, having formed connections in the country, had resolved on remaining here. It proves to my mind, in connection with the very large number of Irish-sounding names to be found entered in the

parochial Church Registers from that period, that indemnity and pardon having been refused the Irish soldiers then in arms against England, they scattered, as so many disbanded militiamen do, to the French-Canadian hearths in the rural districts, and, from their perfect knowledge of the French language, became undistinguishable from the French settlers, and eventually became absorbed in the French population of this country.

And now, like the absent-minded Paschal, I might perhaps close this address by saying: "Pardon the length of this letter, for I hadn't time to make it shorter;" but I feel that you will bear with me a few moments longer, while I give a very brief sketch of the career of the Irish Brigade in Canada.

By de Vaudreuil's Journal, p. 297 of the tenth volume of the New York Documents, we find that the Brigade sailed from Brest, on the 3rd of May, 1755, under convoy of a fleet commanded by Admiral MacNamara, and two of the Captains under him were two Irishmen, Cannon of the frigate La Valeur, and Darragh of the frigate L'Heureux. It is of this Cannon that Comissary Doreil says, in 1758, to the French Minister, p. 755 of volume X of the New York Documents, "The King's frigate, La Valeur, commanded by M. Cannon, a famous cruiser, will bring you this despatch." Cannon is also the intrepid man who alone had courage, after the death of de Montcalm, to volunteer to run the gauntlet of the British fleet, with despatches for the French Minister, and the skill to pass with his vessel unnoticed through a swarm of British cruisers.

The Brigade landed in Quebec on the 26th June,

1755; on the 30th June they set out on the march to Montreal, where they arrived on the 9th July; two regiments were forwarded to Cataraquoi, now Kingston, and the remainder were stationed on the frontier near Lake Champlain.

The first collision that those Irish soldiers had with the British was on the 8th September, 1755; Dieskau, on that day, had with him four companies of Grenadiers, 220 men in all, of the Queen's and another regiment, together with 600 Canadians, and about as many Indians; his second in command was Johnson, the Chevalier de Montreuil, spoken of by Knox. Dieskau's force suddenly met with a British force 1000 strong, under Colonel Williams, sent out by General Johnson, to ambuscade Dieskau. At the first dash Williams' force were utterly routed, and fled in confusion towards the entrenched camp where General William Johnson was stationed with the main body, 2000 strong. The brave but rash Dieskau, without artillery of any kind, resolved at once to storm the entrenched works; and, putting himself at the head of his 220 Grenadiers, he gave the order to assault the place; the Canadians and Indians did not second him. Nothing daunted, Dieskau rushed up against his foes and was met by a perfect hail of musketry and grape. An English officer of Johnson's army has described that assault by saying in a letter to a friend: "The attack was boldly made and bravely sustained; nothing but our breastworks saved us." Three times those Grenadiers dashed at the works, mowed down each time by 20 pieces of cannon and by the fire of 3,000 muskets, until Dieskau, stricken down beyond all hope

of recovery, and surrounded by the dead bodies of 150 of his Grenadriers, reluctantly gave orders to the Chevalier de Montreuil to retreat with the survivors. Accustomed as the English hitherto had been to the cowardly system of fighting then in vogue by dodging behind trees to secure their precious persons, they were so dazzled and intimidated by the unusual bravery of those soldiers with the green facings that General Johnson did not dare molest that little handful of Grenadiers, as they slowly retired, bearing away their wounded.

And those 3,000 troops of General Johnson's became so demoralized, that the General did not dare to move forward for months, and his troops were eventually disbanded and replaced by another corps.

That heroic little band, bearding 3,000 men entrenched within a fortress, you may say, and breasting for two hours a perfect hurricane of fire, and disabling of the enemy three times their own number, equal, if they do not surpass, Leonidas and his 300 Spartans at Thermopylæ.

Well did the Brigade, afterwards, and under a mort prudent Captain, wipe out that defeat; on the 9th of August, 1756, when they were recognized by the French deserter de Hutenac; they numbered only 1350, and, with the assistance of 1200 Canadians and 250 Indians, they performed the feat, deemed impossible at the time, of wading through a quaking morass, half a mile in length, where they sank to the waist at every step, and dragging their artillery after them, and finally, to the great astonishment of the English, planted their siege train on the weakest side, within 200 yards of the works;

and on the 14th August, 1756, after a three days' siege, they captured three English Regiments, Schuyler's, Shirley's and Pepperel's, the two latter Regiments having once already gone down before their headlong charge at Fontenoy; they captured at the same time a very large quantity of military stores and a very respectable military chest. Well might de Montcalm write to the Minister, exclaiming:

"Never before did 3,000 men, with a scanty artillery, besiege and capture 1800, there being 2,000 other enemies within call, the party attacked having also a superior fleet on Lake Ontario."

On the 14th August, 1757, the Brigade, assisted by a small number of French-Canadians and Indians, reduced Fort William Henry and captured 2,400 prisoners, with an immense amount of war material, while de Lévis, at the head of the Canadians, held at bay a superior force that had been sent under Webb to raise the siege.

But the crowning glory of the Brigade was on the memorable day of Ticonderoga or Carillon, as the French are wont to call it. On that day, 8th July, 1758, three thousand men of the Brigade, assisted by 450 French-Canadians, utterly defeated 15,000 of the very best troops in the British regular army; on that occasion they withstood for six successive hours the headlong fury of five times their own number, repelling seven successive charges of the entire body of the enemy, and killing or wounding 4,000 of the enemy, with a loss to themselves of 30 officers and 340 men only. It was at this battle that the Irish officers, whose names I mentioned to

you, received their wounds; their names are taken from the official returns sent after the battle by de Montcalm to the French Minister and to Governor de Vaudreuil. The names of such brave men deserve to be embalmed in Irish hearts; and I therefore take the liberty of repeating them; they are MacCarthy, Fitzpatrick, Douglass, Carolan, O'Moran, Forsyth, O'Hearn and O'Donohue. The other officers killed and wounded on the French side bear French names; but this does not weaken the evidence I have adduced of the Regiments themselves being Irish; for it was the custom, in those days, for Irishmen to assume French names, the better to hide their origin in case of capture by the English, just as Johnson, who had been outlawed for the part he had taken in favor of the Pretender, in 1745, assumed the name of the Chevalier de Montreuil; the honor, too, of commanding such brave troops was eagerly sought after by Frenchmen. De Montcalm, in his despatches, frequently awards the highest praise to officers bearing Irish names; and he tells the French Minister that the great victory of Ticonderoga or Carillon, was entirely due to the incredible bravery displayed by both officers and men; and singularly enough it is to that commissary Doreil, who had suggested their employment, and as if to justify the latter's foresight that de Montcalm, in a touching letter written on the battlefield, the night after the battle, addresses this glowing testimony to the mettle of the Brigade: "The army, the too "small army of the King," wrote de Montcalm to Doreil, "has just beaten his enemies. What a day, "for the honor of France! Had I had two thousand

"savages to serve for the van of a thousand chosen "troops led by de Lévis, not many of the fleeing "enemy would have escaped. Ah! such troops as "ours, my dear Doreil; I never saw their match!"

The following year's campaign saw the most gigantic preparations made to subdue this colony; British armies outnumbering the whole population of men, women and children in Canada at the time, were set in motion to assail it on all sides; the chances were all against de Montcalm; with a force inferior in numbers, and composed of inferior colonial troops, and without awaiting the arrival of de Bougainville and de Lévis, de Montcalm rashly attacked the British on the Plains of Abraham, and lost the battle and his life, and yet no one can venture the assertion that the result of that battle would have been the same, if de Montcalm had but awaited the arrival of de Lévis and de Bougainville, with their trained Irish soldiers; for when again, on the 28th April, 1760, on the heights of Sillery and Ste. Foye, the Brigade met the British in the shock of battle, an expiring ray of glory was shed on Irish valor, and this time it was not the French who ran.

In conclusion, we all must feel some pride in knowing that our race has filled so large a space in the brightest pages of Canadian history; it is also time that others should be made to feel that Irishmen cannot be considered aliens, or ostracized as such, on a soil made famous by their deeds, and hallowed by their blood.

The Lecturer sat down amid much applause.

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